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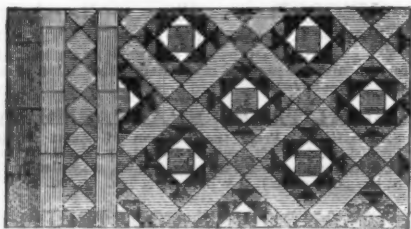
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AUTHOR OF "YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE," "HOBSON'S CHOICE," &c. &c.

BOOK II. THE CONFESSION OF DORIS.

CHAPTER XIII. YES OR NO?

WHAT was I to do? I must own that I was fairly frightened. The cab moved off, leaving Mr. Leveridge standing alone upon the kerbstone, waving adieux to me. I can recollect, even now, how I felt struck anew by the grotesqueness of his figure, the extravagant uncomeliness of his face. He looked like an incarnate caricature. I should have laughed at any other time.

I could not speak. I leant back in the cab, half-closing my eyes, for my head ached badly from nervous excitement and fatigue; from the heat of the studio, with its glare of gas and smell of varnish; and perhaps from my folly in emptying that unaccustomed glass of champagne. Fortunately, Miss Leveridge seemed in no mood for conversation. She, too, was very tired, pale, and worn. She sank back in her corner of the vehicle, and presently she seemed to be sleeping fitfully, out of sheer exhaustion, jerked and jolted, now and then, into very trying positions by the uneasy method of our transit. Was she in her brother's confidence? Did she know of the advance he had made that night in his wooing of me? Had she seen the ring he had given me?

Perhaps not. I started when I found the flames of the street-lamps flashing upon it, wakening the jewels into brilliancy. It was a half-hoop of really superb diamonds. I was convinced their value was very great. I covered my left hand with my right. I wished to avoid seeing

the ring, and I did not want anybody else to see it—for the present, at any rate.

I wanted time to think, and I wanted power to think. I was too disturbed and confused for thought, just then. Nevertheless, it was very necessary that I should reflect upon what had happened, consider my present condition, and decide what should be my course in future.

Safely arrived in Powis-place, Miss Leveridge kissed me, and said good-night to me with unusual ceremony, and with a tinge of fervour in her manner that was also new. She was agitated and seemed very anxious. Something, I think, she wanted to say to me, but the words did not come at the right moment, and I was resolute not to wait for them. I was eager to escape, to lock myself in my chamber, and fling myself upon my bed. She knew, or she suspected, what had happened.

It was a lovely ring; that was very certain. For a long time I could do nothing but gaze at and admire it, turning it this way and that, holding my hand now near to me, now outstretched, studying the pretty streaks of sparkling light, which radiated from the manifold facets of the precious stones. A very beautiful ring; but what did it signify? Marriage with Mr. Leveridge? I trembled at the thought of such a thing. It shocked and scared me. Could I become his wife? I felt that I could not possibly. And yet—

It was not new to me, this idea of marriage with Mr. Leveridge. I had often discussed it with myself. I had talked about it, half-laughingly, with Basil. But it always seemed such a visionary thing—a bare possibility, amusing to consider, but which could scarcely become a cer-

tainty. It had been a sort of remote ghost—a thin, transparent apparition, that was not in truth very alarming—but now it had acquired very distinct form and substance and force, and it had approached near enough to touch me. It set me trembling, and really terrified me.

Of course I could not affect to misunderstand Mr. Leveridge. He had scarcely uttered a word concerning his suit; but his manner was sufficiently explicit, and his ring was really eloquent on his behalf. A queen might have worn such a ring. I had, I own, a woman's admiration for jewellery. How many would be willing, and even eager, to say yes to a suitor who could tender such rings as mine? For it was mine for the moment, at any rate—even though I returned it at the earliest opportunity. If I retained it, without doubt I allowed it to be understood that I had accepted Mr. Leveridge's offer—that I pledged myself to become his wife.

Perhaps I need hardly say that it is with shame I make this confession. But I have resolved that my narration shall possess the merit of frankness, even though I thereby make the fuller disclosure of my own demerits. I am speaking of what is past; and usually I notice people are inclined to candour about their bygone errors, as though simple lapse of time provided a sufficient excuse, however unconscious or disingenuous they may be as to their misdeeds of the present.

The ring made me hesitate—not merely because of its great value, or its exceeding beauty, but because it was emblematical of so much. Without that practical, visible, palpable bait I should hardly have been tempted. I do believe that I should straightway have declined Mr. Leveridge's offer, had it been plainly told in so many words, and unaccompanied by the ring. This may seem hard, and gross, and sordid. I well know the accusations that may be brought against me on the strength of my self-accusation. But the ring appealed to my imagination. It conjured up visions, it drew pictures for me.

I was so poor—we were so poor, let me rather say. For I did not think only of myself whenever I longed to possess money, as, indeed, I did very frequently—the poor are much beset with such longings, and hopings, and dreamings—it was not only for myself that I desired it; I thought of the help I could be to Nick and Basil. It would have been so delightful to me to assist them—to lift them up

from penury to prosperity. There lurks, perhaps, in the bosom of every woman an ambition to be a Lady Bountiful—to patronise and benefit the less fortunate—and to figure in the light of a guardian angel to the ill-starred creature Man. I admit that I was often occupied with such aspirations and sentiments.

It was agreed on all hands that Mr. Leveridge was rich; as his wife, I should share his wealth. At least, he would permit me to act as his almoner—to distribute his charities, and confer beneficences on his account. He was generous, he would be most indulgent; that he loved me I could not doubt. I should be "an old man's darling," with a sort of prescriptive right to be capricious, lavish—to do this or that odd, kind, generous thing unquestioned and uncontrolled. I felt that I could play such a part as that without much difficulty—that it was, indeed, rather suited to me. But this was the bright side of the question. On the other side stood Mr. Leveridge himself, in the character of my husband. He never struck me as so unattractive, ungainly, ugly, and old, as when I viewed him in that light.

What should I do, then? What should I say—Yes or No? Should I keep the ring, or should I give it back to him? It was really imperative upon me to decide, and quickly.

But I could not decide. In spite of my shiverings and burnings, my aching head and perplexing thoughts, I fell asleep at last with the ring upon my finger. I had forgotten to take it off.

I passed a wretched, restless night. I was troubled by horrible dreams, in which, strange, perhaps, to say, Mr. Leveridge played no part. But I had visions of myself, and of Nick and Basil, in extraordinary situations of peril and affliction, and, oddly enough, there always appeared as a bystander, observing our calamities, but in no way exerting himself to lighten them, the pale face and the slight, graceful figure of M. Riel.

I had gone to sleep undecided as to what I should do; when I rose in the morning I was still undecided.

"If I marry Mr. Leveridge, what will M. Riel think of me?" I asked myself as I looked in the glass. I saw and felt that my question had set my cheeks burning. What did it matter what M. Riel might think of me?

I locked up the ring in my dressing-

case. I would not wear it. Then I thought me that, if I were to give it back to Mr. Leveridge, it would be well for me to have it easily within reach—it would be inconvenient if I had to keep him waiting while I went to fetch it. Indeed, it would affect with absurdity a scene that could not but be trying, and was in truth serious enough both to him and to me. So I took the ring from my dressing-case again. But I perceived the danger of keeping so valuable a thing in my pocket. I might whisk out my handkerchief and lose the ring unwittingly. I replaced it where Mr. Leveridge had placed it. My finger had felt rather bare in its absence.

Miss Leveridge usually breakfasted in her bed-room, but she had made an effort on that morning, which for her must have been considerable; she had risen early, and I found her presiding at the breakfast-table. Poor thing! she had made sacrifices to what she conceived to be her duty. She rose from her chair as I entered the room. She was as white as a ghost, and seemed trembling in every limb.

"My dear," she murmured faintly and helplessly, "I ought to say something, I know, but I can't—I can't." She grasped both my hands in a nerveless, agitated way; then she fell upon and kissed me, or made-believe to kiss me. I can recollect the odd sensation of her very cold nose pressing against my hot cheeks.

"Try and think that I have said all that I ought to say, my dear."

"Please say nothing, Miss Leveridge. That's the best way, I think. You know the proverb tells us, that the least said, the soonest mended."

I felt myself a fool as I said this, and I was conscious of a dreadful, school-girlish, hysterical, idiotic giggle. My shame at my own folly does not date from to-day.

"Ah, my dear, but dear Dick's happiness is at stake. Can you wonder that I am bewildered? Poor Dick has been so much to me for so long a time. You will make him so happy. Say that you will."

"It is my turn to own, Miss Leveridge, that I don't know what to say," I answered.

"I am sure that you will make him happy. Forgive me if I have ever feared otherwise—if I have ever in that way done you injustice. My dear, he loves you so much—and he loved your poor mother before you. He would have married her if she had consented, and now he will, of course, be reproached for marrying you,

seeing that he's so much older—old enough, as people say, to be your father. But it isn't for me, of course, to be telling you such things. Forgive me, my dear. I was never very wise at the best of times, and you know what a poor creature I am in point of health. But, indeed, I have Dick's happiness very much at heart."

"Please don't say any more, Miss Leveridge." But she would go on.

"I know he's not handsome. He never was. He was always considered odd and plain-looking, even by his own family. But you don't know—you can't know—how good, and kind, and worthy, and excellent he really is. He was the best of sons, and he's been the best of brothers, as I can testify. Nothing could be kinder, or more generous, or more delicate, or more considerate than his conduct to me. What I should have done without him, Heaven only knows. My dear, you'll find him one of the tenderest and most devoted of husbands. And he is really very well off is Dick. He's made a great deal of money by his paintings. I disapprove of them, but they certainly sell very well."

"Will you pour out the tea, please, Miss Leveridge," I interposed, "I do so want my breakfast."

I could think of no other way of stopping her distressing garrulity.

CHAPTER XIV. ENGAGED.

I SAW nothing of Mr. Leveridge all that day. I was thankful to him for his absence. I had dreaded his coming to claim me as his prize, or to gloat and chuckle over me as his victim. That he forbore to do this seemed to me generous under the circumstances. It was not flattering to him as a lover, or complimentary to his suit; but I liked him the better for his apparent avoidance of me.

I had not yet determined what I should do, what leave undone. It appeared that I was engaged to be married, without any distinct appeal having been made to me for my consent to that arrangement. It was as though I had really no voice or interest in the matter. I had spoken no word importing acceptance of Mr. Leveridge's hand. Nor could it be that, by glances or smiles, I had signified approval of his addresses. For really I had not done so, even in thought. Mr. Leveridge had simply misconstrued my bearing and the state of my feelings towards him. How was I to undeceive him? Or should

I reconcile myself to his view of the position, and leave him deceived?

I did nothing. I decided in Macbeth fashion that, whatever might happen, should happen without my stir. Or rather, I came to no decision at all. My intellects were too disordered, my nervous system was in too feeble and vacillating a condition. I felt that, at sometime or other, I must make a stand. I must brace myself, more or less resolutely, and try and regain control over my own fortunes. But the time had not arrived, or I was unequal for the present to the task.

I sat in an easy-chair with my hands before me. I locked myself in my room. I was occupied with thinking, thinking, thinking—but in a confused and purposeless way. I had no clear view of my position. A sensation of numbness seemed to affect me, body and mind. I was incapable of thought or deed of an earnest, unfaltering sort. I was, or deemed myself, almost in a somnambulant state; nor could I, although I tried, escape from the feeling of dreaminess, that appeared to envelope me like a cloud. All the while I despised myself for my weakness and my irresolution, just as I should have despised anyone else similarly placed, chargeable with like infirm conduct. And despising myself, I was lured on to hate all the world about me. In truth, I was most miserable.

And yet, when Mr. Leveridge presented himself, I was tempted to laugh both at and with him. He had dressed himself with unwonted care. He wore a flower in his button-hole; he carried a little bouquet of blush roses, which he proffered me with much old-fashioned courtesy. His white hair was glossy with pomatum; his handkerchief was highly scented with bergamot. And then his white hat with a very curly rim was smooth and lustrous as satin; his highly-polished boots were undimmed by a speck of dust—he was, I think, proud of his feet, which were really of small size, and of good shape. He looked completely a lively old bachelor, assuming the airs of a bridegroom.

He advanced with a light, tripping step. His eyes were bright with happiness. Clearly he was untroubled by the slightest suspicion. He was fully confident that he saw in me his future wife. If I had said "Yes" to him a thousand times, he could not have been more satisfied as to my acceptance of his suit.

"My dear," he said in a low voice, "you have made an old man very happy."

I shrank back, for I feared he was about to kiss me. He was content, however, to possess himself of my hand, to raise it tenderly, and press it against his lips.

For my part, I was trembling violently. I could not utter a word.

"You are pale, my Doris," he said, "you look tired and ill, my poor darling. Well, well, it is not surprising, perhaps—you need peace and rest. We must take care of you. I must not have my pretty one suffer. She has given me a real right now to tend and protect her. It shall be my duty and my delight to ward off all trouble from her. She has given her happiness into my keeping—I must show myself worthy of the trust. And indeed, my poor little one, I will do all I can, all man may, to make you happy, and to convince you of my devotion and of my gratitude. For I owe you much—very much—my dear Doris. Does my talking distress you? Is the sound of my voice wearisome to you?"

I had moved uneasily in my chair; I confessed that my head ached badly.

He rose to look for my smelling-salts.

"Where is my sister?" he asked.

Miss Leveridge had been in the room when he entered; but she had departed with rather odious alacrity, demonstrating, as people will in like case, with needless force her consciousness that a third person was an objectionable presence. I particularly disliked being regarded with Mr. Leveridge as an ordinary young, loving, and engaged couple. I had nothing to say to him that his sister was not fully welcome to hear. Indeed, for the moment, it seemed that I had nothing to say to him of any kind whatever.

"Are you really ill, Doris? Shall I send for my sister, to come to your help?" he enquired with really touching solicitude.

"No, thank you; I need not trouble Miss Leveridge. I am better now."

I fear he understood me to express a preference for being alone with him; but I could not help it. He drew his chair nearer to mine; but still there was space left between us.

"My dear, I'm not a young man," he said, presently, "as you do not need to be told; and yet I am not so very old either. I may reasonably count upon some years of life remaining to me. Let me say that they shall be all devoted to your service. And my heart is still young, Doris. For hearts don't grow old quite so rapidly as heads do. Not but what I'll own," he said,

with an odd air of self-accusation, "that my heart has seen some service. I shouldn't be telling tales of myself, perhaps; but as a lad I was susceptible and sensitive, apt to melt, and tremble, and glow, and thrill in the presence of beauty. I have always had a lover's heart, although I was never blessed with a lover's looks. Yet don't think that I've been for ever distributing my affections right and left of me, broadcast, as though they were mere halfpence. I have been all my life faithful to one ideal. I found it years ago in your mother, Doris; but I found it only to lose it. I was deprived of it, or, rather, it was not really for me in those times, and now I've found it again, not to lose it, but to hold fast to it; to love and to cherish it unto my life's end. Amen."

He waited, as though he expected me to say something; but I was not capable of speech. What, indeed, could I have said to him?

"I didn't think, of course, when I loved her—and I loved her deeply and truly, and with my whole heart—that I should ever be loving a child of hers as I love you, Doris. For I love you, my dear—well, well—more than I can tell you. There are things not to be set forth, or expressed, or made intelligible by words, and love's one of them, and especially my love for you, dear one. And mind, it isn't merely because you are your mother's child that I love you, although that would be a very good reason. If you were not her child, I should love you just the same. You are like her, and yet you are unlike her, too. I love you because you are like her—all the same I love you even more, I think, because you are unlike her. That may not seem a compliment to her; but it's true. You've often a great look of her. I am often amazed at the likeness. Then there comes an expression upon your face I never saw upon hers. You're a stronger will, I think; your character is more defined and decided."

He was wrong, it was clear. My mother had been able to dismiss his suit straightway. It was true, however, that she loved someone else—my father.

"Of course," he went on, rather ruefully, "I cannot hope to be loved now as once I hoped. A young man always thinks he richly deserves to be loved—that love should be his almost as a matter of right, because of his surpassing merits and special worth. I dare not look for love of that kind. I shall try to earn your

esteem; I shall be content if I can win from you the affection of a daughter towards a father. For you will be to me at once wife and daughter. I do think you may be happy, Doris; I do think so, and I hope and pray so. I know that some sacrifice is asked of you; I know and feel that full well. A girl like you needs must entertain certain notions of romance and sentiment—not in the least to be despised because of their romance and sentiment—as to the bestowal of her hand and her affections. That you deserve a younger and a handsomer husband, I will admit, frankly and heartily; but if you can make this sacrifice, Doris, I venture to promise that you shall not regret it. You are heart-free. Will you let me try and gain a share of your heart? I am old; but I am sympathetic. I don't forget that I have been young; I don't stand aloof from the ways and the thoughts of the young. You will find me indulgent. I am what people call—well, I am ashamed to speak of such things, but it must be said, I suppose. I have worked hard and have sold my pictures, and have so earned money. Well, all I have I place at your feet with myself. Your aims and objects in life shall be mine. I am bent upon making you happy. I shall live only to accomplish that. Your brothers, dear lads, shall be my brothers; your friends shall be my friends. Indeed, Doris, it is your happiness I have in view when I ask you to become my wife—it isn't mere selfishness that urges my suit. I seek a real right to love and protect you—to serve you and, so far as I may, secure you from care and trouble."

There were tears in his voice as he spoke; there had been tears in his eyes almost from the first. His manner was most kind and tender; for all the plainness of his words there was an air of refinement about his way of speaking them, I had never before remarked. His sincerity could not be questioned. I was genuinely affected. I had never liked him so much before.

"Indeed, Mr. Leveridge, I thank you," I said. "I am very sensible of your kindness to me. I am, indeed, most grateful for all you have done for me and for my brothers. I feel that I am not worthy of your love."

Something more I said, I forget what. But I sought to depreciate myself—to reduce the exalted estimate he seemed to have formed of my merits—and to turn away his love from me. He listened, not

very attentively, I think, and by no means convinced by anything I had said. He nodded his head once or twice, and smiled upon me very kindly, and he kept on smoothing and patting my hand in a tender, caressing way.

"There, there," he said, "we will say no more about it now. I have distressed and wearied you, I daresay; and your head ached to begin with. I was always rather a proser, and I've brought tears into your eyes—to say nothing of my own. I shall leave you now: remain quiet, close your eyes, and sleep if you can. God bless you, dearest. Think of me as kindly as you can. And let me count this little hand mine, and mine only, from this day forward."

He again lifted my hand to his lips, and then he stooped down and kissed me on the forehead.

He left me. My cheeks were burning, and my lips were parched with fever. I could not help crying grievously as I buried my face in the sofa-cushions.

I was engaged to marry Mr. Leveridge, that seemed clear. I was engaged—partly because I had been without the wit or the courage to protest, to say "No," or to assert myself at the right moment, and partly, I suppose, because I had not really been unwilling to be engaged. But of the joy and elation, which girls are said to experience upon accepting a lover's proposal, and promising themselves in marriage, I certainly felt none; but rather deep shame and contrition.

And I confessed to myself that this matter would have been ordered otherwise, that I should have spoken to Mr. Leveridge in very different terms, if I could have believed that M. Riel cared for me—or, if he had but addressed a kind word or two to me on the night of the birthday-party. Not, I say again, that I loved M. Riel. But his want of love for me piqued, and vexed, and angered me.

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

If it be difficult to write biography—"to attempt the life" of one's friend, as Hook called it—how much more serious is the task of recording one's own life journey! Its uphill and downhill; its stoppages and the various obstacles it has encountered, albeit all is at last well, have often a certain humiliation about them, which makes their relation painful and inclines us to gloss them over; then how we shall write of our contemporaries is, if we are

not very thick-skinned indeed, a source of great embarrassment; there is a temptation to speak one's mind which is, for once, by no means a proof of moral courage; and a temptation to be silent, when to be so would take the very backbone out of our book. Moreover, if our autobiography treats of faith and feeling, as well as of mere action, the difficulties are infinitely increased. We are prone to place the "views" of one portion of our lives in the wrong period, especially in the records of our youth, and to fit a philosophic garment on what was in fact mere impulse and fancy. If we pretend, like Rousseau, to tell all, we are certain to fail, because it is not in human nature to be so daring; and, when we once begin to palter with the truth, all is over with our enterprise. Our proposed life becomes a mere fiction without incidents. The popular idea that we do not know ourselves is, notwithstanding a great classical authority, a false one; though the gift of "seeing ourselves as others see us" is, it is true enough, denied to us. We know ourselves better than anybody else, just as an author knows his book better than any critic; we have given more time to the study; we have had better opportunities of observing the subject; and with what folks call our faults—of which they suppose us to be peculiarly ignorant—we are above all things conversant. Indeed, some of us pass all our lives in the endeavour to conceal them. Yet when we are dead, and something "comes out" concerning us, which causes our most intimate friends to say, "Who would have thought it?" it never strikes them that we must ourselves have known all about it, and the secret characteristics that led to "it" all along. No one is so well fitted, in some ways, to write a man's life as himself; but, in other ways, no one can do it so ill. It is human nature to gloss over our own weaknesses, to exaggerate our influence, to excuse, to mitigate, and sometimes even to lie when writing about ourselves. It is only very seldom that we find a man, in relating his own conduct, just to others as well as to himself; in speaking of his own views, frank and natural; appraising his own talents, modest without the affectation of humility. "One (such) man in a thousand have I known," says one, who claims to speak with authority; "but one (such) woman in a thousand, I have not known." But then he did not know Harriet Martineau.

No one who read the biographical sketch of her, written by herself, in the *Daily News*, and published the day after her death, can have failed to have been struck by its marvellous moderation and fairness. Where it erred, was just where a critic—which means an unfavourable outsider—would have erred, in the way of deprecation and detraction. In her just-published autobiography, this drawback is not so prominent, because there is no attempt to sum herself up for the judgment of posterity, though the modesty and “quiet” of the record is as complete as in the former case. There is no flourish of trumpets, far less any tinkling brass. The whole book, though full of life and reality, is as serious and, apparently, as accurate as a scientific essay. When the whip is used—as in the case of Lockhart and Brougham—it is laid on, though sharply enough, as if in the public interest; there is no sign of any personal indignation, or, at all events, of any pleasure in the infliction of the chastisement. It might have been more dignified to have let the culprit go scot free; but then there would have been a miscarriage of justice.

There is at the very commencement of the work a characteristic disinclination to waste time about genealogy and one's grandfather, which at once wins the favour of those who have gone through much biographical reading. We are merely told that the ancestors of Harriet Martineau crossed the Channel with other Huguenot refugees in 1688, on the occasion of the Edict of Nantes, and settled in England. One of them pitched his tent at Norwich, where his descendants “afforded a succession of surgeons up to my own day. My grandfather, who was one of the honourable series, died at the age of forty-two, of a fever caught among his poor patients. He left a large family, of whom my father was the youngest. When established as a Norwich manufacturer, my father married Elizabeth Rankin, the eldest daughter of a sugar refiner at Newcastle-on-Tyne. My father and mother had eight children, of whom I was the sixth, and I was born on the 12th of June, 1802.”

At the very beginning of her life the seed was sown of that ailment, with which all personal recollections of Harriet Martineau are inseparably connected—her deafness. Being a delicate child, she was sent to a wet nurse in the country, who, “holding on to her good place after her milk was going or gone,” did her little

charge an irreparable injury. Her health became wretched, and continued to be so for nearly thirty years. Those “long years of indigestion by day and night—mare terrors are mournful to think of now.” From her infancy, in fact, this strong-minded woman, as it is the fashion to call her, was a prey to nervous and morbid fears, and her bringing-up was unhappily far from judicious. In her early days—it must have been the consequence of her ill-health, for in later years she was far otherwise—she was gloomy and reticent. “It never occurred to me to speak of anything I felt, and I doubt whether my parents ever had the slightest idea of my miseries. It seems to me now that a little closer observation would have shown them the causes of the bad health and fitful temper which gave them so much anxiety on my account; and I am sure that a little more of the cheerful tenderness, which was in those days thought bad for children, would have saved me from my worst faults and from a world of suffering.”

This is a very charitable way of putting the matter; “cheerful tenderness” neither was nor is “withheld from children, because it is thought bad for them,” but because parents were and are too cold or too selfish to employ it; but no one will find fault with the tenderness that gives so charitable a solution of the matter. Her treatment in her own family, when her deafness was getting more pronounced, seems to have been thoughtless and even harsh. Remarks such as “None so deaf as those who won't hear” seem to have been spoken loud enough for her to hear them, and on a child with such a strong sense of justice must have had the worst effects. “I did once think of writing down the whole dreary story of the loss of a main sense like hearing . . . but there is no saying that an elaborate account of the woe would create the sympathy for practical purposes.” At a very early age, “long before I dreamt of being deaf myself,” she had an example of the miseries of this defect. A girl of her acquaintance was very deaf, and when it was announced by any child at the window that — was coming up the steps, there was an exclamation of annoyance. “What shall we do? We shall be as hoarse as ravens all day,” and so forth. “When I was growing deaf, all this came back to me; and one of my self-questionings was, Shall I put people to flight as — does? Shall I be dreaded and disliked in that way all my

life?" From becoming "a bore to all the world," through that inquisitiveness which is the bane of deaf people, she was saved by her own marvellous strength of will. "I made a resolution, which I never broke, never to ask what was said." To her steady adherence to this piece of self-denial the present writer can testify. He well remembers the patient look with which she would contemplate the smiling faces around her, and though her ear-trumpet lay on the table before her, would wait for an invitation to learn the joke.

It was good-humouredly observed by a well-known author, that nothing had amused him more in Miss Martineau's conversation, than her statement that "some man in the Strand made all her ear-trumpets." "Why, good gracious," said he, "she can never have worn even one out by listening to other people." This was an unmerited severity. She was always ready to listen to what was worth hearing, though her great conversational powers were certainly not suffered to fall into disuse.

Some persons have called Miss Martineau a "female John Stuart Mill." It is scarcely possible to have selected a greater misnomer; for she was genial, tender, and sympathetic. Only once or twice in early youth does she remind us of the childhood of the great philosopher. Between two and three she began to preach in an oracular manner; she would nod her head emphatically and say, "Never ky for tyfles; dooty fust, and pleasure afterwards," and so forth, and edge up to strangers and ask them to give her—a maxim. At nine years old, when there was a little baby-sister born at home, she thus expressed her satisfaction at the event: "I shall now see the growth of a human mind from the very beginning." But, as a general rule, she differed from Master Mill *toto cœlo*; indeed, during her childhood, and long afterwards, her mind was almost entirely given up to religious thought. "While I was afraid of everybody I saw, I was not in the least afraid of God. Being usually very unhappy, I was constantly longing for heaven, and seriously and very frequently planning suicide in order to get there. I knew it was considered a crime, but I did not feel it so. I had a devouring passion for justice—justice first to my own precious self, and then to other oppressed people. . . . It is evident enough that my temper must have been very bad."

Having discovered at an early age that

the globe swam in space with sky all round it, she communicated this fact to her brother James, and between them they set about a great scheme, which they had, nevertheless, no doubt of executing. They had each a little garden, the soil of which was but two feet deep, after which came broken bricks, &c. &c. Their plan was to dig completely through the globe and emerge at the other side. When they found that their wooden spades could not even get through the brick-bats, they altered their plans. "We lengthened the hole to our own length, having an extreme desire to know what dying was like. We lay down alternately in this grave, and shut our eyes and fancied ourselves dead, and told one another our feelings when we came out again, and we fully believed that we knew all about it."

It was the one weakness of Harriet Martineau through life that she fully believed "she knew all about" such matters as death and futurity, although she altered her opinion about them many times; and though she ended, as is well known, and is retold in the present volumes, in differing from the rest of mankind in the rejection of what is usually termed "religion," she remained very credulous with regard to certain "facts" which the common sense of ordinary persons refuses to accept. We are not speaking of the mesmerism matter which is to some extent an open question, but of other things. Notably, in much later years there was a story of a Jesuit miracle, on which she pinned her faith to such an extent that it produced a temporary breach between her and some very dear friends, and even caused a discontinuance of her literary connection with the predecessor of this periodical (*HOUSEHOLD WORDS**).

As a child she was eminently spiritual, without, as we venture to think, being very imaginative. The octagon chapel at Norwich had some windows in the roof, through which she was constantly looking for angels to come down, and take her to heaven in sight of the congregation. "I was thinking of this and of the hymns the whole of the time. It was very shocking to me that I could not pray in chapel. I believe that I never did in my life, though I prayed abundantly when I was alone."

* Reference to dates, to letters, and to a survivor, show that the writer's imagination exaggerated, and her memory failed in, almost every statement respecting a far from formidable difference of opinion which arose about a trifle.—ED. A. Y. R.

The whole current of her youthful thoughts indeed ran in a theological channel. She used to tabulate scripture texts, and confided to her mother that she hoped it might be printed and make a book, and then she should be an authoress. This produced such ridicule in the domestic circle that she resolved "never to tell anybody anything again." Her first literary effort was therefore made in secret.

There was a certain Unitarian periodical called the *Monthly Repository*, to the office of which, at nineteen, Harriet Martineau ventured to address an article on *Female Writers on Practical Divinity*. "I took the letter 'V' for my signature—I cannot at all remember why. The time was very near the end of the month. I had no definite expectation that I should ever hear anything of my paper, and certainly did not suppose it would be in the forthcoming number. That number was sent in before service time on a Sunday morning. My heart may have been beating when I laid hands on it, but it thumped prodigiously when I saw my article there, and in the *Notices to Correspondents* a request to hear more from 'V' of Norwich. There is certainly something entirely peculiar in the sensation of seeing oneself in print for the first time. The lines burn themselves in 'upon the brain' in a way of which black ink is incapable in any other mode." After tea in the family circle, her married brother said, "Come, now, we have had plenty of talk; I will read you something," and he held out his hand for the new *Repository*. After glancing at it, he exclaimed, "They have got a new hand here. Listen!" Then, after reading a paragraph or two, he repeated, "Ah, they have got a new hand; they have had nothing so good as this for a long while." (It would be impossible to convey to those who do not know the *Monthly Repository* of that day, how very small a compliment this was.) "I was silent, of course. Next (and well I remember his tone, and thrill to it still) his words were, 'What a fine sentence that is! Do you not think so?' I mumbled out, sillily enough, that it did not seem anything particular. 'Then,' said he, 'you were not listening. I will read it again. Harriet, what is the matter with you? I never knew you so slow to praise anything before.' I replied in utter confusion, 'That paper is mine.' He made no reply, but read on in silence. When I was going away, he laid his hand on my shoulder and said gravely (calling me

'dear' for the first time), 'Now, dear, leave it to other women to make shirts and darn stockings, and do you devote yourself to this.' That evening made me an authoress."

Immediately after this she wrote her first work, *Devotional Exercises*, "of which," she says, "I now remember nothing." She also began a theological-metaphysical novel, but "at the end of half a volume I became aware that it was excessively dull, and burned it. This was the only piece of my work but two (and a review) in my whole career that never was published." To be an author in those days, however, was one thing, and to be paid for one's writing was another. Not till six years after her introduction to the public did Harriet Martineau make her first "pecuniary success," which consisted of five pounds sent by a Calvinistic publisher, one Houlston, of Wellington, Shropshire, for two little stories published at eightpence each. Presently Houlston wrote for a longer story. "My *Globe* newspaper readings suggested to me the subject of machine-breaking as a good one, some recent outrages of that sort having taken place; but I had not the remotest idea I was writing on *Political Economy*, the very name of which was unknown to me, or conveyed no meaning." She wrote *The Rioters*, the success of which was such as to cause some hosiers and lace-makers of Derby and Nottingham to bespeak a tale on the subject of wages—*The Turn-out*. After this she regularly wrote little tracts for Houlston, which he sold for a penny, and for which he paid her a sovereign. It was in 1827, and when she was twenty-five, that she learnt for the first time, from Mrs. Marcet's "*Conversations*" on that subject, that she had been teaching political economy without being aware of the fact.

In 1829 Harriet Martineau's father failed in business; and, as her deafness precluded "governessing," she became entirely dependent upon the scanty proceeds of her pen. At one time she was literally without a shilling, "inasmuch that, in those days of dear postage, I dreaded the arrival of a thirteen-penny letter. The sale of a ball-dress brought me three pounds." She hoped, and not without reason, that her skill with the needle would support her for a time; and "I did earn a good many pounds by fancy work. For two years I lived on fifty pounds a year." Even for what she wrote she received little more than the wages of a seamstress. The

Traditions of Palestine, published during this same year, was quite a literary success, but seems to have brought little grist to the mill. The Monthly Repository could give her next to nothing for her articles, and no London editor would "look at them." "My heart was often very near sinking, as were my bodily powers, and with reason."

At this time the Central Unitarian Association advertised for prize essays, by which Unitarianism was presented to Catholics, Jews, and Mohammedans: ten guineas were to be given for the first; fifteen, for the second; and twenty, for the third. The essays were to be super-scribed with a motto; the motto was to be repeated on the sealed envelope containing the writer's name, which was not to be looked at till the prize was awarded, and then only in the case of the successful candidate. She resolved to try for all three, and she gained all three. The reading her name out at the Unitarian May Meeting, with the clappings and the "hear, hears" that accompanied it, must have been a proud moment for her, though the memory of these triumphs—for there were many such—annoyed her in later years, because she then thought them purchased at the expense of truth. "I had now found," she tells us, "that I could 'write,' and might rationally believe that authorship was my legitimate career." And yet she was as far, if not from fame, from fortune as ever. The failure of her attempt to get her famous Illustrations of Political Economy brought out is a very painful story. No publisher would venture to undertake the proposed series. "The public excitement about the Reform Bill and the cholera," they said, "forbad it." She was in London, making personal application to the gentlemen of the Row, in vain, for many weeks. "Day after day I came home, weary with disappointment and with trudging many miles through the clay of the streets and the fog of the gloomiest December I ever saw. I came home only to work, for I had to be ready with the first numbers, in case of a publisher turning up any day." No publisher turned up, and yet she did not give in. One day, however, she almost succumbed. "I could not afford to ride the four miles and a half (to her London home), but weary already, I felt too ill to walk at all. On the road, not far from Shoreditch, I became too giddy to stand without support; I leaned on some dirty palings, pretending to look at a cabbage-bed, but saying to myself, as

I stood with closed eyes, 'My book will do yet.'" In six months from that date she was the most famous woman in England, and her society courted by all sorts of cultivated persons, from secretaries of state to the editor of the Edinburgh Review.

The narration of this enormous change in her fortunes must be read in her autobiography itself, for it is a long, though most interesting, story; it is sufficient to say here that the "Series" was started by subscription, and at once made an immense success. Her reputation was established, not only as an authoress, but as a political writer. Mr. Mill himself, who had said that "'political economy' could not be taught by stories," very frankly acknowledged his error, and members of the Ministry called in person at the humble lodgings of "the young woman in Fludyer-street, Westminster," to hear her suggestions upon the forthcoming Budget.

From this date the character of Harriet Martineau's life changes; the struggling authoress becomes—or rather people tried to make her so and failed—a literary lion. She had her foes, too, as well as her friends, and she lets us know it. No one will blame her, who ever read the infamous attack on her in the Quarterly Review, for her refusal to speak to Lockhart; nor can we wonder that she took the same line with Moore, in consequence of a scurrilous poem which he wrote about her in The Times newspaper. A few nights after its publication she was at an evening-party, when the host came to say that Rogers and Moore were anxious to make her acquaintance. "I was obliged to decide in a moment what to do, and I think what I did was best under such a difficulty; I said I should be honoured by Mr. Rogers's acquaintance, but if Mr. Moore was, as was generally understood, the author of a recent insult to me in The Times newspaper, I did not see how I could permit an introduction." The little bard was made very uncomfortable, and deserved it; but, in some cases, we think Miss Martineau's personal judgments were harsh. She would not speak to Sterling, the editor of The Times, on account of the rude way in which that paper spoke of her refusal of a pension from the Ministry. Of Lord Brougham, in 1834, she says: "His swearing became so incessant, and the occasional indecency of his talk so insufferable, that I have seen even coquettes and adorers turn pale, and

the lady of the house tell her husband that she would not undergo another dinner-party with such a guest." Of Macaulay she expresses a very hostile opinion. "It has long been settled that literature alone remains open to him; and in that he has, with all his brilliancy and captivating accomplishment, destroyed the ground of confidence on which his adorers met him when, in his mature years, he published the first two volumes of his History. His review articles, especially the one on Bacon, ought to have abolished all confidence in his honesty, as well as in his capacity for philosophy." A good deal of this bitterness may, perhaps, be explained by Miss Martineau's views of the political party to which Macaulay belonged, and which she despised beyond everything both socially and politically. "I have seen a good deal of life," she writes, "and many varieties of manners, and it now appears to me that the broadest vulgarity I have encountered is in the families of official Whigs, who conceive themselves the cream of society and the lights and rulers of the world of our empire."

In 1834 Miss Martineau went to America, about which she has much to say, which would have been more interesting had it appeared when this autobiography was written—namely, in 1854, when she was seized with that illness which, as she believed, would result fatally in a few months, but which forbore to strike the fatal blow for more than twenty years. On her return from that country, this lady, once a suppliant at "The Row," found half-a-dozen publishers at her feet. She gives a most humorous story of three of them, Saunders, Bentley, and Colburn, all calling at her house at once, where there were fortunately—as they all hated one another exceedingly—three separate rooms at their disposal. She does not, however, seem to have got much out of any publisher. Two thousand pounds was all she received for her thirty-four numbers of the *Illustrations of Political Economy*. For the American book she got nine hundred pounds, and for another work on the same subject, six hundred pounds. Altogether, reviewing her financial position in 1854, after more than thirty years' incessant literary labour, she concludes that she has made but ten thousand pounds by her pen. The best offer ever made to her—though in very vague terms—seems to have been one by Mr. Murray, after the publication

of *Deerbrook*. "He said he could help me to a boundless fortune and a mighty future fame, if I would adopt his advice. He advised me to write a novel in profound secrecy, and under appearances which would prevent suspicion of the authorship being directed towards me. He desired to publish this novel in monthly numbers, and was willing to pledge his reputation for experience on our obtaining a circulation as large as had ever been known." The lady's answer was characteristic. She "could not adopt any method so unprincipled—in an artistic sense—as piecemeal publication."

About this time, however, ensued her first illness—the one which she endured at Tynemouth, and from which, after six years, she was raised, as she avers, by mesmerism—and no literary work of any kind, save her charming *Life in the Sick Room*, was to be done.

Our space is coming to an end, and we must omit much, both of entertaining and instructive matter, to which we would fain have referred. Everyone knows how, after her Tynemouth illness, she journeyed to the East, published her *Eastern Travel*, and eventually settled at Ambleside. She has done the present writer the honour of transcribing into these volumes a description of that place, which he wrote, when a very young man, in the columns of *Chambers's Journal*. To him it is astounding, that she should speak of herself as having been unable—though with all the will in the world—to assist people on the road to success in literature, save in one or two cases. Her help was often asked, always given, and, in many cases, though perhaps not directly, was of the greatest practical advantage.

Her views were decided upon almost every point, but, though sometimes peculiar, were never advanced in a dictatorial manner. She would own to her want of appreciation of many good things. She had considerable sense of humour—though she always denied it—but not enough gaiety of heart to appreciate Dickens. She was unable to read *Vanity Fair*, from "the moral disgust it occasioned," and a great drawback to its author in her eyes was, "the impression both his looks and manners conveyed to her that he never could have known a good and sensible woman." She has written, as it will be seen, severe things of many persons, but also some very kind ones. Her admirable description of London society when she

was a star in it of the first magnitude, has at least as many pleasing portraits as unfavourable ones. Her account of Joanna Baillie, "with as innocent a face as if she had never written a line, and who had enjoyed a fame almost without parallel, and outlived it," is one of the most beautiful and touching we have ever read. Sydney Smith, too, was one of her prime favourites. He remonstrated against her going to America, after having expressed her anti-slavery views. "I can fancy your enjoying a feather—one feather—in your cap; but I cannot imagine you could like a bushel of them down your back with the tar."

We have no room for the curious account of how Harriet Martineau's translation of Comte's works came about, or for the history of the Atkinson Letters. Suffice it to say that her hands were never so full of literary work as at the time (as she fancied) she received her sentence of death. She had been writing story after story in Household Words, and especially those admirable accounts of English manufactories which are perhaps without a rival; she had undertaken to conclude her History of the Peace for the Messrs. Chambers; and she was writing sometimes as many as six leading articles a week for the Daily News. For many years afterwards she continued to write for the last-named paper, but quite contrary to her expectation. She penned her autobiography, which here ends, under the idea that her days were numbered. But if she had written her life up to the last, instead of having deputed the task to another, however competent, she would probably have given the same verdict upon herself—notwithstanding a certain romantic disappointment in early life, and much sickness and trouble later on—which she wrote in 1854: "I believe I have been the happiest single woman in England."

It is interesting to note that, at the very time our authoress was being accused of preaching revolution, blasphemy, and even worse, by unscrupulous Tory critics, the Duchess of Kent sent her a message of acknowledgment of the usefulness of her stories in connection with the education of the Princess Victoria. That young lady's favourite among the Political Economy series was, it seems, Ella of Garveloch.

There are some admirable observations, that it would do the world good to lay to heart, in this record of a famous woman's life. One of them is concerning the

curious impertinence that prompts amateurs to give their advice to authors, and to authors only.

Even "musicians have not to complain of this interference. Amateurs let them alone. It is to be hoped that, some time or other, literary works of art will be left to the artist to work out according to his own conception and conviction. At present it seems as if few but authors had any comprehension whatever of the seriousness of writing a book."

Lastly, as the epithet "strong-minded" has so often been applied to Harriet Martineau in an unpleasant sense, it may be well to say that she had no sympathy with the Ladies of the Platform. "The best friends of the cause (of Women's Rights) are the happy wives and the busy, cheerful, satisfied single women, who have no injuries of their own to avenge, and no painful vacuity or mortification to relieve. . . . Often as I am appealed to to speak or otherwise assist in the promotion of the cause of women, my answer is always the same—that women, like men, can obtain whatever they show themselves fit for."

A PRETTY BLOW UP.

ANGLING is usually associated with ideas of coolness. Even in the height of summer, when the stick and the string, with a worm at one end and you know what at the other, start to pursue their intellectual amusement, they pick out the greenest meadow, the shadiest clump of willows, the loudest-whispering line of aspens, and the freshest streams, whereto to make the least possible exertion, mental or corporeal. Bobbing for eels hardly begins before sunset. Night-lines, often affording such satisfactory hauls, are laid down at dewy eve and taken up at rosy dawn. The fly-fisher follows his more active occupation along rushing streams, by refreshing waterfalls, amidst bracing mountain breezes, almost always in picturesque sites where sunshine enlivens without oppressing. Whether whalers ever complain of heat, I know not. If they do, they are scarcely reasonable. All fishing-parties are not so fortunate as they are. Your humble servant lately took part in one which would have welcomed an iceberg from the Arctic Circle.

For more than a week we had been lying off Cape Palmas, at the entrance of the Gulf of Guinea, within thirty miles of

it, more or less. The sea, as flat and smooth and shining as oil, reflected, all day long, the rays of the blazing and burning sun. Not a breath of air stirred, unless towards night a stray tempest brought us a little coolness, paid for at the price of torrential rains. The thermometer, rarely lower than eighty degrees Fahrenheit, had an obstinate habit of standing at ninety degrees.

On board a sailing vessel, during a calm, you have only to lay in a good stock of patience; but in a ship which, although a steamer, restricts its locomotive agents to sails, you have a perfect excuse for going crazy. Our commandant—an old weather-beaten Jack Tar, as stubborn as a mule, and surly and crabbed when he thought his sailorship or his authority questioned, though good-hearted in the main, and even jolly at times—had made up his mind not to get up his steam, but to make the passage with his sails alone. One day one of us gave him a hint that we were in a fair way of dying, either of heat or of hunger; but he got such an answer, as to discourage him completely from volunteering any further advice.

We killed time, therefore, as well as we could, by searching out the coolest corners in which to chat and hold converse by fits and starts, till it much resembled the game of Cross Questions and Crooked Answers. "Aura, veni!" sighed a youth fresh from college; but nobody seemed to understand him. In fact it was too hot to talk, and even to listen. The hardest workers amongst us were completely done for, and gave up attempting any serious occupation.

One sultry evening we were clustered on the poop, out of temper with the sea, which was as smooth as glass. The few wrinkles on its face were not caused by any breeze. No such luck! That line of coast abounds with fish, and, in consequence of the fish, with sharks in any quantity. That evening they were prowling about by hundreds. Every dimple on the sea, soon spreading into a streak of phosphorescent light, was caused by the fin of a hungry shark, anything but particular what he got for his supper. When hanging about a ship, only a few yards from her sides, the first-come object is the first to be swallowed; a bone, or an old shoe, go down just as well as a biscuit. I have even seen a shark swallow a bottle, and was sorry I could not ask if its digestion had been easy. Poor things, they must eat something! In such

a closely competitive struggle for life, the wonder is that they don't eat their own tails.

"An idea strikes me," suddenly exclaimed Maury, a young gentleman of lively imagination; "what a capital opportunity!" After which he was buried in deep reflection. "Certainly, 'tis practicable. I will pay the expense out of my own pocket, if the commandant will only consent."

And he ventured to go to the commandant, who, after sundry smiles of incredulity, half disdainfully, half confidentially, nodded permission. "Do as you please," he gruffly said, not sorry in his heart for any incident that would divert the impatience of his officers. "You may try if you like, only don't blow the ship up."

We asked what new maggot was biting Maury? What fresh-hatched bee had got into his bonnet? We pelted him with a choice of sarcasms, which he bore with the air of pitying our ignorance.

"He is laying his plans to catch a mermaid," said Dubois.

"He is going to send a telegram to his mamma," said Jarnac.

After each and all had had his say, everybody retired to bed.

Next morning, without communicating his secret to any of us, Maury astonished the master-gunner by asking for certain mysterious water-tight cylinders, four inches broad and two inches wide, capped or primed in the middle with fulminating powder. When used for the experimental practice of firing them off by electricity, a little common gunpowder is put into them to render the explosions more perceptible, but not enough to injure the ship or its inmates from which the said experimental practice is made. To let our cat out of the bag, these pretty cylinders are torpedoes.

To obtain a more decisive result, Monsieur Maury used dynamite in lieu of gunpowder, and that in liberal quantity, obtaining thereby a firework of very respectable potency. To the wires of the priming he fastened a conductor, consisting of a couple of wires, like those which cause bells to summon housemaids and footmen, the whole terminating in an exploding apparatus called a *coup de poing*. The torpedo was then enclosed in so lovely a piece of bacon, that no shark, at the sight of it, could help the water's coming into his mouth. Corks sustained the line of communication with the battery, and kept the

highly-seasoned morsel suspended about a foot below the surface of the water.

Nothing more was wanted now, except a customer for the devilled pork; and, as sometimes happens when the best plans are laid, all Maury's trouble seemed to have been taken in vain. Not a fin would show itself, not a hungry mouth would gape. The commandant took his walk on the deck, munching his cigar, and pretending not to notice what was going on, but stealing now and then a glance at the operations with a knowing twinkle in his eye. Shrugging his shoulders, as much as to say that it was beneath his dignity to wait any longer, he went down to his *déjeuner*; we also went to ours. He was swallowing the last mouthfuls of that pleasant meal, when a steersman brought him the news that several sharks were in sight. "Ah, indeed!" he said, immediately rising from table. We wondered what the old commandant could want with sharks, which for him were anything but a novelty. He must have seen sharks ever since he left off baby-clothes. Ten minutes afterwards, the same steersman came down to us with a message, politely inviting us to join the commandant on the poop. Of course we obeyed, and found Maury in the midst of heaps of traps and tackle, with the air of a general besieging a city whose fall is certain.

Sundry sharks were cruising round the vessel at a few yards' distance—a common sight enough on board a ship of war in the tropics. The whole crew were on the look-out, perched here and there amongst the rigging, as if they awaited some extraordinary event. Maury carefully let down the bacon into the water, not allowing it to come too near the ship. The exploding pile was placed so as to allow the operator to watch everything that passed outside. The attention of the public became more and more excited; the commandant himself could not help mingling with the crowd.

Sharks, like pretty girls, have their caprices. Although the bacon was tempting—as white as snow—and its perfidious contents completely hidden, several sharks sailed up to it leisurely, smelt it, swam over, under, and round it, with airs of the most complete disdain. At last one of them, sharper set than the others, or at least less prudent, turned on his back and engulfed the bait inside his capacious gullet. Maury, without losing an instant, gave a vigorous thump on the handle of his exploder. Immediately we, the spec-

tators, were ducked and bespattered with a grand splash of water and scraps of shark's flesh. The shark, in convulsions, sank for an instant, and then floated motionless on the surface of the sea. The sailors applauded the successful result with a triple salvo of huzzas.

It was desirable to see what were the effects of the explosion, and to hold a post-mortem on the body. The commandant, therefore, allowed a boat to be lowered, in order to pass the noose of a rope round the dead shark's tail, and so hoist the carcass on board. Jarnac, in his hurry to get into the boat, and secure for inspection the fragments of the exploded bait, fell into the water. Instantly a party of sharks went at him. A rope was thrown out to him over the ship's side, up which he climbed with astonishing agility. Never did gymnastic practice produce happier results. In a very few minutes he would have disappeared piecemeal down the voracious creatures' throats. As it was, friend Jarnac, literally and figuratively, saved his own bacon, though little, if any, from the torpedo.

The shark's head was completely shattered; a good third of the jaw was gone, the rest was broken up into shreds. Evidently the explosion had taken place at the moment when the animal closed its mouth on the bait. Such splendid success naturally inspired the wish to try again. The commandant gave Maury *carte blanche*; but, anxious to combine the useful with the agreeable, he suggested the trial of the effect of a torpedo outside and at a distance from the bait, hanging a foot beneath it, in three feet depth of water. Any shark who might be bent on tasting the bacon would thus be about six inches above the torpedo. Would it blow him up, or only tickle him?

There was no want of sharks. The first-killed individual was cut up into joints, and as fast as the pieces were thrown into the sea, they were unscrupulously swallowed by those insatiable stomachs whose everlasting craving is for "More, more!" No qualms did they feel at this cannibal feast. The hungry pack waited about the ship, looking out for further rations. Maury, not to spoil his first triumph, took his precautions leisurely. Soon a shark was nicely in position—crack! went the exploder. The animal, thrown completely out of the water, along with an inconsiderable quantity of saline fluid, fell back with its belly torn open,

and sunk, violently agitated. Probably its back-bone—which isn't a bone, but only a cartilage—was broken.

At this Maury, elated with victory, asked for an hour—and took two—to make further improvements in torpedo-fishing. The result was a galvanically-primed torpedo, capped with platina-wire. In this case the conductor was connected with a powerful pile. A piece of sail-twine, fastened to the conductor, induced, by its breaking, the interruption of the current. In this way, if a shark swallowed the bait, the shock would break the twine, and the torpedo would explode. It was, in fact, a self-acting torpedo, expressly for the use of sharks.

When these arrangements were carefully made, and the contacts established, the apparatus was lowered into the sea. We then had only to await the good pleasure of our interesting victims. Our suspense was not long. A candidate presented himself, and swallowed the bacon without the slightest pull on the line; but the instant that he gave the stroke of his tail which was to scull him away, the sail-twine broke, the explosion took place, and the animal was so completely cut in two, that its head and shoulders remained fastened to the line, which had got between its teeth. The monster had swallowed his prey without making a movement, consequently it was in his very stomach that the explosion occurred. *

A second torpedo had been got ready. It was soon put into the water, and everybody crowded forward to enjoy the expected fun. The required shark soon made his appearance, the twine broke, the line tightened till it upset the galvanic pile, nearly pulling it into the sea. Our shark, who had succeeded in cutting both line and conductor with his teeth, sailed off majestically with the unexploded torpedo in his belly. Lucky for him that he was not an ostrich, with a gizzard plentifully furnished with nails and pebbles! But, if he can digest a wine-bottle, why shouldn't he assimilate a nice cool torpedo? Maury, in his feverish hurry, had forgotten properly to establish his contacts. Of course, to his great annoyance, we laughed heartily at this trifling oversight.

The sport, resumed with proper precautions, went on till the dinner-hour took everyone except the commandant unawares. He crowned the day's amusement by inviting us all; Maury was the hero of the feast.

Just when a fair allowance of wine had been drunk to his health and to his next fishing-bout, a sudden inclination of the sloop abruptly brought the toasts to an end. The commandant rushed on deck, and we after him. It was blowing a gale strong enough to tear your eyes out of your head. We were caught by a tornado. Those storms, you know, give no more warning than a thunderbolt. Vessels are often sunk at once. We got off cheaply: main-topsail carried away, fore-topmast broken. The next day it was blowing fresh, and there was an end of torpedo-fishing.

JOTTINGS FOR BOOKWORMS.

BOOKS are among the best friends a man can have; and yet he does not always treat them with the kindness and respect they deserve. A reader need not be a book-worm to do this; a reasonable book-lover knows, or ought to know, what is due to these dumb yet ever-speaking companions of his room. There are a few interesting matters connected with the manufacture or building-up—so to speak—of books, on which we will say a few words, before touching on the recommendations of practical men, concerning their good management and preservation.

In the first place, the paper. The old cut-and-dry designations have lost much of their meaning; and the sizes of sheets of paper are no longer so definite as formerly. When a heavy excise duty was in full force, the manufacturer was subject to numerous troublesome restrictions, which prevented him from giving due development to his trade; but now, the burden being removed, new energy is thrown into the matter, new materials introduced, new paper-making machines invented to keep pace with the magnificent printing-machines of Walter, Hoe, Marioni, and many others. Nevertheless, for book-work, it is found convenient to retain the old names for sheets of definite sizes. It would be useless now to enquire how the names arose. An odd medley they are: pot, foolscap, post, crown, demy, medium, royal, super-royal, and imperial; and, for special work, requiring very large sheets, elephant, atlas, colombier, double elephant, and antiquarian. The size varies within such wide limits, as to show how little definite meaning there is in the designation, "a sheet of paper." From fifteen inches by twelve and a half, up to fifty-three inches

by thirty-one: the largest has more than eight-fold the surface of the smallest. We can but dimly guess what the future may have in store for us in this matter. Paper-makers can now make several miles of paper in one sheet, while the Walter and some other machines will print these miles of paper, and at the same time cut it up into sheets of any desired length. The page of a newspaper could now be made

Too broad to be conceived
By any narrow mind—

like the many-caped great-coat on the back of Hood's stage-coachman. There has been one exceptional number—possibly more than one—of the Daily News, in which the single sheet measured fifty-three inches by forty-six; and these great dimensions could easily be exceeded by an adaptation of the machines employed.

Next, the colour of the paper; concerning which much has been written and said by Mr. Power, Mr. Leighton, Mr. Edwards, and other bibliophiles. Great book-readers may, for the nonce, be placed in two classes—the tinted and the white. The former declare that tinted or toned paper fatigues the eye less than white. Mr. Babbage, the distinguished mathematician, when he had completed a new table of logarithms, solicited the opinions of numerous persons on this matter; one and all stated that they would like the work to be printed on toned paper, rather than white; but they could not agree as to which tint is the best. The first edition was printed on pale yellow-toned paper, the second on pale green. On the other side, four objections are urged against any decided tint. Different eyesights require different tints, if white is once departed from; a tint suitable by daylight, may be unwelcome to the eye by candlelight or gaslight; tinted is from five to ten per cent. more costly than untinted paper, and would in that sense render our books more expensive; lastly, almost all the tints fade in an unsightly way by degrees—a sober buff or nankeen being perhaps the least fugitive.

The paper being selected, the sheets printed, and the volumes bound, a grave question, it appears, has sprung up among the custodians of valuable libraries, whether or not to use gas for evening lighting? Of course, the binding is primarily chosen on other grounds than this; but still it is known that—of costly bindings—Morocco leather is less affected by impure air than Russia; that the latter is less

attacked by worms and insects than the former; that calf is worse than both the others in these particulars; that sheep leather is good enough for most school books; that gilt cloth, or stamped cloth without gilding, has almost entirely driven paper-boards out of the market; and that strong canvas is a cheap and useful binding for books that pass much from hand to hand, such as those in some working-men's and village libraries. But, be the books and the bindings what they may, we are asked to consider how to treat them by evening light. The gas made in London is unfortunately very impure, and is treated as a delinquent by many librarians. Some years ago, the books in the library of the Athenæum Club were found to be in a seriously injured state, many of the handsome bindings being sadly discoloured and decayed. The club appointed a committee of its own members—comprising Professor Faraday, Professor Brande, Mr. Aikin, Mr. Prout, and Mr. Brown—to investigate the matter. Applying various chemical tests, the committee arrived at a conclusion that the mischief had been wrought by sulphur, in the form of sulphurous acid gas; and furthermore, that this destructive agent had resulted as one of the products of the gas-jets and burners, with which the rooms were lighted in the evening. A question arose whether to substitute oil for gas, or to adopt some improved plan for carrying off the fumes and vapours that ascend from gas-lights. Faraday recommended the adoption of the second of these two courses; and, assent being given, he commenced the work. Since that time, the books in the library have not suffered to the same extent as before. Mr. Brayley ascertained that the books at the London Institution, in Finsbury-circus, were similarly suffering; and as those on the upper shelves were in worse plight than those on the lower, he inferred that ascending fumes and vapours, as from gas-lights, had wrought the mischief.

When these facts became known, other libraries were examined; and the opinion was strengthened, that gas-lights had been workers of mischief. The library of the Royal College of Surgeons, and that of the Philosophical Society of Newcastle-on-Tyne, were among those injured. A fine library belonging to the Earl of Tyreconnel, at Kilpin in Yorkshire, was found to be almost destroyed, so far as concerned the handsome bindings of the books. Some of the books in the office of The Times,

in rooms strongly heated by gas, had shrivelled up and broken, after two or three years' use. At the London Library, in St. James's Square, the subject has been much discussed, whether to use gas or oil. The general opinion now seems to be, that gas is cheaper, handier, and cleaner, than oil-lamps; and that the destruction of books and book-covers by gas fumes, is best prevented by judicious arrangements for carrying off the products of combustion. A solution of this problem has not been called for at the great national library of the British Museum, seeing that very little artificial light is used in that invaluable establishment.

Book lovers have something to say about mildew. In a library at Liverpool, mildew attacked the inside of the covers of the books, sometimes the printed paper also, at others the margin of the leaves likewise. When closely examined, the mildew was found to consist of roundish or irregular brown spots, presenting no evidence of organisation. Experiments led to a conclusion that the mischief was due to some sulphurous agent employed in bleaching the paper on which the book was printed. If such were the case, there could be no actual cure; but dryness and good ventilation would prevent the mischief from spreading.

Human book-worms are occasionally vexed by the presence in their books of real worms—little beings whom we should hardly expect to be influenced by a taste for literature. A correspondence sprang up a few years ago among bookish men concerning these worms, with a view to collect such facts as were obtainable. One correspondent described the book-worms, or, at least, a book-worm, as being about one-seventh of an inch long, rather narrow in proportion to the length. He believed that the ravages are made when the worm is in the larva state, at which time it resembles a small cheese-mite. One book-doctor says that the best way to get rid of book-worms is to mix an ounce of powdered camphor with an equal weight of colocynth (or tobacco), and strew this in thin layers on the book-shelves; the layer to be renewed after a few months' interval. It may perchance be effectual; but we cannot regard this as other than a somewhat untidy way of treating shelves whereon handsomely-bound books are placed. In some libraries a new and invisible enemy is said to have made its appearance within the last few years. It

attacks new books, beginning at the top, and rapidly destroying the upper margins of the leaves, usually stopping when the printed matter is reached. Sometimes it begins at the bottom; very rarely at the sides. If a volume be regularly bound, with cut and coloured or gilt edges, this enemy does not appear; the evil usually makes itself first visible on the cottony or fibrous edges of newly-cut cloth-boarded books.

On one point all authorities are agreed—the necessity for good ventilation. The books in a library should not be exposed to extremes either of temperature or of dryness; tolerably circulated air, of fairly good purity, will answer better than any doctored-up atmosphere. It has been laid down by a good authority that light without injury to colour, a slight humidity without mildew, and air without soot or "blacks," are as necessary to a library as to a greenhouse. If gas be used to light a library, the choice bindings should certainly not be exposed to it. A glass-fronted bookcase, kept closed for months or years together, is not necessarily the best receptacle; to let in a little fresh air once now and then, by daylight, is a course that has good sense to recommend it.

So far as concerns the dainty books a lady places on her drawing-room table, a little perfume may be agreeable enough; but we cannot say much for the dandyism which would perfume a whole library, unless with some direct intention to the preservation of the books from the sources of injury above named. Musk, with a little oil of neroli, placed in an open vessel in the bookcase, or bits of cotton-wool dipped in oil of cedar or oil of birch, and placed on a few of the shelves, are among the remedies sometimes adopted.

We are cautioned by all good bibliophiles against the barbarism of ill-using our books, which, if worth keeping at all, ought to be treated with care and regard. Never cut open the leaves of a new book with the finger; it is an inexcusable bit of laziness; a smooth-edged paper-knife is better for this purpose than a keen-edged steel knife. Never lift a book by the corner; nor take it from the bookshelf by the head-band; nor hastily pull open a new book, or a newly-bound book, if the back is stiff, on peril of finding the front-edge made to resemble a flight of steps ever after; nor stand a book long on its fore-edge, as this will injure the proper curvature of the back. If you have the misfortune to tear a leaf of a book, do not resort to the clumsy

expedient of pinning or sewing; a narrow slip of pasted paper is a much better doctor. Do not shut up cards, dried leaves, nor botanical specimens in a volume, if the binding be costly or elegant; they will lessen its firmness and symmetry in the course of time. Never bind a book when fresh from the press; the ink is pretty sure to set off from one page to the opposite by the pressure. Those who possess choice old books are advised never to discard antique bindings, if the volume will hold together tolerably well; nor is it the custom of a lover of books to commit the anachronism of putting old books into new jackets, or old jackets upon new books. Lastly, do not inflict on your books the rude indignity of—sitting upon them.

In reading our books, we certainly ought not to turn down the leaves as a means of noting the page at which our reading last ended. This leads us to say a little concerning book-markers, which, as ordinarily made, are apt to slip out of place. The late Professor de Morgan, who discoursed upon many things and had something useful or curious to say upon all, recommended a mode of making and using a book-marker consisting simply of a narrow slip of paper. He bids us take a rectangular slip, double it by means of a fold, and then double one of the halves; one half of the whole slip will form the marker, while the other half will serve as a pair of legs to hold it in its place by bestriding the top of the leaf. The thinner the paper the more likely is it to hold in its place. In regard to loose leaves, unstitched into sheets or a volume, it is difficult to keep a marker from dropping out and thereby becoming useless. To ensure greater firmness, he suggests that the rectangular slip to form the marker should be doubled sideways so as to present a marker, and what may be called a handle, joined at a bevelled crease; the handle should then be inserted between the leaves at the back, and the rest will act as a marker. This description is not altogether clear, but it is Professor de Morgan's own.

Books, however tenderly we may treat them, will, of course, become dimmed and faded in time; and, even under ordinary usage, we naturally see them more or less soiled, stained, discoloured, or otherwise disfigured. Bibliophiles have not left us wholly without hints as to the best modes of lessening, if not of remedying, these evils; at the same time dwelling on the

fact that prevention, by careful usage, is better than cure. If the leather backs of books have become soiled, we are told that they may be furbished up a little. Procure some bookbinder's varnish or French leather varnish; clean the leather with a little water, and, when it is dry, apply the varnish with cotton-wool, lint, or sponge. Another plan consists in cleaning the leather with a piece of flannel, sponging it with beaten yolk of egg, and polishing when dry with a hot iron. If the surface of the leather is much decayed, or the grain worn into holes, we are bidden to fill up the defective parts with paste, and dry them before the yolk is applied, to prevent the tint at these spots from being blackened by the egg.

The recipes for removing grease and stains from the leaves of books are numerous. One is to get some scrapings of pipeclay, magnesia, or French chalk; apply them to both sides of the paper, and press with a moderately hot iron. This plan is also said to be available for removing grease stains from coloured calf. Another method consists in applying warm water, absorbing the moisture by means of blotting-paper, and brushing on a little warm essential oil of turpentine; re-bleach the paper by means of ether, benzine, or chloroform. For single spots of grease or wax, wash with any one of the liquids just named, absorb with blotting-paper, and pass a heated iron over the surface. To remove what are called iron-moulds, or iron-stains, apply a solution of sulphuret of potash, then a solution of oxalic acid, and wash with clean water; the first solution loosens the iron, the second dissolves it. The wise men also tell us of another remedy, by diluting spirits of wine greatly with water, and applying it to the iron-mould spots; after letting it remain a minute or two, wash off with clean water.

Quite an army of chemicals are named as being useful for the removal of grease spots; but the chief are oxalic, tartaric, and citric acids. Slightly diluted, any of these acids will render some service, at any rate, if applied with a camel-hair pencil. A bit of chloride of lime, about the size of a nut, dissolved in a pint of water, makes a solution which similarly removes ink and grease spots, if the pencilling be repeated several times. Single leaves, when disfigured with stains of oil, grease, tallow, or wax, have often been restored to tolerable purity; partially fill a wide-mouthed bottle with sulphuric

ether, naphtha, benzine, or chloroform; roll up the leaf and put it into the partially-filled bottle; after brisk shaking for a minute or two, take out the leaf, and wash it in clean cold water.

One more of these jottings for book-worms, and we have done. Do we, any of us, possess a book which we believe to be rare, and wish to ascertain the technical definition of rarity? Listen. In the first place, a book is not rare, in a dealer's estimation of it, unless there is a demand for it; if nobody wants it, nobody cares whether it is rare or not. The causes of real rarity, or scarcity, are many. The book may have been printed by one of the early printers, such as William Caxton or Wynkyn de Worde; or it may be a first edition of a celebrated old work, or a copy printed on vellum or large paper; or only a few copies may have been printed; or the book may have been withdrawn by the author or the publisher; or the printed edition may have been nearly all destroyed by fire or other accident; or it may have fallen dead upon the market, and been sold to the trunkmaker or the waste-paper dealers; or the work may never have been completed; or it may have been privately printed; or it may be in a little known language; or it may have been purposely kept from the general market on account of being heretical, licentious, libellous, or seditious. When, through any of these causes, the copies in the market have become comparatively few, the principal dealers and collectors of old books adopt a curious mode of classification. If the book is not current in the trade generally, it is "infrequent;" if not common in the country where sought for, "rare;" if hard to find in the neighbouring countries, "very rare;" if only fifty or sixty copies have been printed, "extremely rare;" and, if it is believed that not more than ten copies exist in the whole world, the book rises to the dignity of being "excessively rare."

WHAT HE COST HER.

BY JAMES PAYN,

AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MARRINGBERD," "AT HER MERCY,"
"HALVES," &c.

CHAPTER XL. THE WOLF IN THE FOLD.

I SOMETIMES wonder—but always to myself, lest the susceptibilities of those who hold "Whatever is, is right," should be wounded—whether it might not be of advantage to the human race if less time were given us for reflection. On the

whole, the impulses of men are, at least, as good as their principles; and certainly self-interest asserts herself more and more, the longer the opportunity that is afforded her to do so. How often do we say, "This will be right," and then after a little thought—though the act remains as right as ever—"But is it expedient?" or, "Is it advantageous?" after which the good deed is postponed indefinitely. Even as a matter of intelligence, it is better in nine cases out of ten, where promptness is possible, to act with promptness. The whist-player who takes time to think—as he miscalls it—generally increases the magnitude of his impending transgression. But in moral cases the proverb, "Second thoughts are best," has always a selfish significance. They are best, no doubt, for oneself and one's own gratification; but that is all. Where the question lies between "What is right?" and "What is pleasant?" to hesitate is, indeed, to be lost. The temptation with an unprincipled, but not wholly abandoned character, to procrastinate in such a case is immense. He wishes to establish for himself a sort of neutral territory between good and ill, in which he can debate the matter in question, and—as he says to himself—come to a just conclusion; this is a sort of purgatory that leads eventually to the Infernal Regions. It is a mistake to suppose that bad impulses are to be resisted; they are to be knocked down and trampled under foot at once. If you come to argue with them, they will beat the best rhetorician or philosopher, who is but human after all.

Poor Cecil Landon was very human, but not at all a philosopher, so it may be guessed how it fared with him in his question of conscience. He did not, however, give way at once to his temptation. He contrived the matter so sagaciously that he left it in the hands of Fortune; while, at the same time, he supplemented her so as to make all sure. He made up his mind that he would take no action in the matter of Rose Mytton unless he heard from Grantham. If she made no sign, neither would he; but, then, as we are aware, he felt certain that the cheque would come to him for her railway fare, and with the cheque there would surely be a few lines.

In the meantime, he worked at his office like a horse, and did all he could to stop his thinking. He might as well have tried to stop the stars from twink-

ling in the vault of heaven. His imagination was ceaselessly active; now, he was with Ella, forlorn, forsaken, wondering at his cruel silence; or picturing her to himself as she would look one day, when the news came that she was not his wife, and that he was the husband of another woman. He saw the fierce denial in her glowing eyes, and then the despair of her proud face, when the truth was forced upon her. He saw his father, shamed and sorrowful; and all the faces of his friends—Darall among them—cold, contemptuous, and averted. He saw Colonel Gerard Juxon, furious, revengeful, thirsting for his blood; and this was the least hateful of the spectres of the Future that thus haunted him. He was not afraid; he could give back word for word, and blow for blow, but against himself, and against those other ones—and especially against her who loved him—he had no defence. He saw Rose, tender and shrinking, dragged, as it were, from her peaceful home into publicity; the sport of vulgar minds, the scorn of natures pure and gentle as her own; trustful in him to the last and forgiving him, but wounded, nevertheless, to her heart's core. He saw Helen's noble face turned upon him with loathing; he saw the good vicar's honest scorn. There are many sins pleasant enough in their fruition—in their blossom of a day—but whose Before and After may well give us pause; and here, indeed, was one of them. If Rose was to be his heaven, he had to pass through purging fires indeed to gain her; and when he had done so, the fires would burst out afresh and with tenfold fury. The thought of the consequences of what he meditated was sometimes so overwhelming, that he almost resolved to abandon it; but it was the "almost" of King Agrippa.

On the third day a letter came for him under cover from his friend in town, whose address he had given to Helen. For many minutes he did not dare to open it; but sat with it in his hand, conning the handwriting, which, though a lady's, was very distinct and clear. In that "Henry Landon," so bold and steady, he did not seem to recognise Rose's hand. And yet whose but hers could it be? She would scarcely have deputed Helen to write for her; though, even if she had, there would be some message, which—let it be what it might—would take him back to Grantham. He had shifted the responsibility of the matter from his own

shoulders—so he reasoned—to those of Fate, and now Fate had decided for him that he was to return.

Presently he opened the envelope with reverent care so as not to destroy the address—the first lines of her dear handwriting he had ever seen—and out dropped the cheque and a note.

"DEAR SIR,—I enclose the amount which you were so good as to pay for my sister's railway fare, and remain yours truly and obliged,
HELEN MYTTON."

Rose had not written at all. He was so amazed and even offended that, for the moment, he could make nothing of it. What on earth could it mean? It was not her right arm that was injured? Why, therefore, had she not written? And she had not sent so much as a word of kindness. One might have supposed that he would now have owned, "Well, Fate has decided against me." So soon as he began to reflect, however, he at once came to the conclusion that Helen had written, without telling her sister that she was doing so. It was to Helen he had given the address, and not to Rose, who had only his initials at a post-office in her pocket-book. Perhaps she had written thither. He had a great mind to take the mail-train, to town that evening and go to that post-office; but, on the whole, he thought he might venture to telegraph, paying, of course, for the reply. In half an hour he received it. "There is no letter lying for H. L." Fate, then, one would say, had evidently declared against him. Cecil, on the contrary, drew a directly contrary conclusion. Rose had wished to write, but was deterred from doing so by her pradiish sister, aided by her slave, the vicar; she was acting under compulsion, and it was the duty of an honourable man to go to her rescue. She had been persuaded—no, not persuaded, for that was impossible—but her ear had been abused concerning him; it was incumbent, therefore, upon him to go and defend his character. Or, again, they had told her that it was unladylike, unmaidenly, in her to write to him, and that any communication between them should come from his side, not from hers. He would, therefore, make it at once, and in person.

This contingency had been arranged for beforehand, though he never owned to himself that such was the case. The advisability of starting a branch establishment of their house farther south had

been hinted at by the late manager, and the proposition had received Cecil's adhesion. It was a promising project in itself; but what had given it favour in his eyes was, that it would afford him an excuse for absenting himself from Wellborough, quite indefinitely; and then instead of going south he might go north-east—to Grantham. If the gods who wished to destroy him had made him mad, there had been, at least, much method in his madness. And now, growing more mad, he used more method. He employed an agent in town to take business chambers for him in Greythorn-street—where we have once seen him—that he might have a local habitation and a name in London to satisfy the enquiries of Rose's friends; and as for herself, he knew that she would believe all, without enquiry. He had given his first name to her (Henry) instead of the second, not by design, but by a sudden instinct; he did not choose her to call him "Cecil," as poor Ella did. But he used the name of Henry now, as a precautionary measure. There might be many Henry Landons, but scarcely another Cecil. No matter what care he took to hide himself, he felt that there was risk for him every way; but there was no help for that. There would be danger, too, when the present wish was over, and he had gained his point in wedding Rose—for he no longer concealed from himself that such was his intention—but there was no help for that either. He would have taken all Rose's danger on himself, and, to give the devil his due, all poor Ella's ruin, too, if that had been possible. If the consequences of sin could be limited to those who commit it, sin would be comparatively sinless—the sinner's "own look out," as the phrase goes; but, unhappily, it involves others who cannot "look out," and who are punished with him.

Cecil strove to forget this remorseful thought in action. Time was now become everything to him. He was well aware, if Rose became acquainted with his position, and, notwithstanding that he could have proved his first marriage illegal, not only to her own mind, but to the whole world, it would have availed him nothing. She would have had nothing to say to him, save "Farewell." Every moment, therefore, in which he was not making way with her was precious time lost, and an opportunity for discovery. He repaired to his office, and wound up the clock of his affairs there, so that matters should

go on without him as long as possible; and then started, nominally for the South upon a business tour, but in reality in another direction, and with a very different object—to Grantham. He had thrown dust in the eyes of his father, and of his own clerks; he knew that Ella's pride would prevent her becoming importunate, and that, for the present, he would be unmolested. He was neither in health nor spirits; but a certain wild excitement had possession of him; the last time he had travelled by that route he had been in a low fever; he was now in a high one.

On arriving at Grantham in the afternoon he went straight to the Stranger's Rest, to deposit his portmanteau.

"What? Back so soon, sir!" cried the landlady, with whom such open-handed visitors as Cecil were rare; "we are main glad to see you. One of the young ladies from The Casket has just gone by towards Pullham."

"Indeed," said Cecil, with an indifferent air, "which of them was it?"

"Well, I didn't see her face; but I think—as the vicar was alongside of her—it must ha' been Miss Helen."

The naïveté of this remark—the honest divine's attachment to the young lady in question being as well known in the village as his Christmas sermon—would, under other circumstances, have tickled Cecil; as it was, it only pleased him with the prospect of finding Rose at the cottage alone. He took his way thither at once, and boldly enquired of the servant if the young ladies were at home.

Miss Helen had gone on foot—she was a great walker—to Pullham, was the reply; but Miss Rose was in the garden. Etiquette was evidently not strictly observed at The Casket, for the girl pointed quite naturally to the glass door which opened on to the lawn, and Cecil was not slow to take the hint.

Rose was sitting by the fountain with a book in her hand, which she was apparently conning with great attention; her back was turned to the cottage, so that she was not aware of Cecil's presence till he came quite close; then she sprang up with a little cry of pleasure and a pretty flush, and held out her hand. The next moment the flush deepened, and with her other hand she slipped away the book, but not before he had identified it with the pocket-book in which he had written his initials.

"I am so glad to see you can use your left arm," said he. "Is it quite well?"

"Quite well," returned she.

"I was afraid, from not getting a line from you, that it was at all events still unserviceable," observed Cecil.

It was cruel of him to reproach her thus in order to extort from her some gracious confession; but even the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

"Well, the fact was, I—I mean we—that is, my sister—thought it better that she should write."

"So that you should not compromise yourself in any way," said Cecil, smiling, "with a total stranger, who might be anybody, or nobody, a penniless adventurer, eh? It was a very wise and prudent course. I was prudent myself last week when I ran away from Grantham without so much as wishing you good-bye. I cannot tell you how it pained me to do so. You must have thought it very strange."

"I—I was very sorry, of course," said Rose, stirring the daisies with her dainty foot; "but Helen understood you to say that you had good reasons for your departure."

"So I had, the best and worst of reasons. There was an obstacle to my speaking certain words, that were always trembling on my lips, to you, Rose. That obstacle is now removed; and the words, which I am now free to utter, were, 'I love you.'"

Her eyes, that had been riveted on the grass, looked up for an instant into his tender, longing face, and then once again sought the ground.

"I have known you so very short a time," said she, softly—"though it is true under unusual circumstances—and, as Helen says, we are so utterly in the dark about you, Mr. Landon."

"You called me 'Henry' once," answered he, "when we were not so well acquainted? Why not call me 'Henry' now? Of course you are in the dark about me, Rose; and I am come back on purpose to throw light upon that subject—I hope not altogether an uninteresting one to you. I believe I shall have little difficulty in satisfying your sister as to my prospects and position; my doubt, my fear is lest I should fail with you—for, believe me, I am conscious of my own unworthiness."

His last words at least had the genuine ring of truth about them, and to Rose's ear so had they all. So far as she was

concerned, he felt that he had already gained his point.

"I am so sorry—Henry," said Rose, presently—the dainty, hesitating way in which she called him by his christian-name was music to him—"that my sister is from home."

"I am not at all sorry," answered Cecil, laughing. "She is enjoying her walk, no doubt—as I am sure Mr. Welby is—and I am very happy here alone with you. Are not you happy also, dear?"

When the watch-dog did arrive, only a few minutes before dinner-time, the wolf was quite at ease in the fold, and secure of his position.

"Has Mr. Landon been long here?" enquired Helen, with feigned indifference, when the servant informed her of the arrival of the visitor.

"He has been here all the afternoon, miss."

Helen's heart, freighted with vague misgivings, and only certain of the event it had dreaded, sank within her.

"So you are come back, Mr. Landon?" said she, summoning up a smile to greet him.

"Yes, he is come back," put in Rose, triumphantly. "Did I not say he would?"

Those words alone—had Cecil needed such, which he did not—would have been a revelation to him of her love. His wooing was over; but every step of the road he had to tread, before he could win her—whether it should be long or short—was set with pitfalls.

CHAPTER XL. REFLECTED HAPPINESS.

MONTHS had now passed away since Ella had heard one word—save from Mr. Landon the elder, and that only of vague report—concerning Cecil. She felt his coldness and his silence, as some ship's company, shut up in Arctic seas, feel the approach of voiceless winter. Every day the barrier between her and home was growing broader and more formidable; the parallel failed in this alone, that for her there was no certainty of spring, yet rather the menace of eternal exile. She had remained at Woolwich—not, indeed, as the commissary's guest, but contributing with her usual liberality to the common expenses—much longer than she had originally intended, not because she was happy there, but because her own house was hateful to her, but now it became necessary that she should return to it. Her host had openly expressed his intention of marry-

ing Miss de Horsingham, and though he did not propose to make her his wife at once, he made no secret of his purpose so to do before that decent interval which society has imposed upon widowers who take to themselves a second spouse. She could no longer countenance by her presence the frequent visits of the lady thus openly proclaimed a bride elect; and she strove to persuade Gracie to accompany her, and leave her father's roof for hers. "I have nothing to offer you, darling, but my friendship and a home," said she, with pitiful pleading; "my heart is no longer mine to give, though he who won it from me values it at naught; just a few poor embers of love and goodwill are left for you to warm your hands at. Come, dear, for charity's sake, if not for love's, and bear me company."

But Gracie would not go.

"When my father marries, I will leave him, and if you are still in the same mind, Ella, will come to you, at all events for a little while, till I can gain some means of livelihood. I cannot eat the bread of idleness and dependence, even though it be your bread——"

"Great Heaven, what talk is this!" broke in her friend impatiently. "What is money that it should weigh a feather's weight in life's balance! Even I have money—and look at me!"

The scorn and pathos of her words and tone were terrible.

"My darling, it was my dead mother's wish that I should do my duty here, till I was superseded by another," returned Gracie quietly, "and I dare not disobey it."

There was pathos in poor Gracie's words also, and, as her friend perceived, an implacable resolution. So Ella went back to her stately house, so well provided in all things save that which makes house home, and which being absent leaves it bare indeed; and Gracie stayed on at Woolwich. Their mutual affection continued as warm as ever, but their lives exhibited even a greater contrast than before. Ella, though well-nigh friendless, save for Gracie, had many to call her friends. She was still cut off indeed from a certain portion of her old acquaintances, the echoes of whose harsh judgments reached her from time to time; her husband's absence gave them fuel, and they heaped coals of fire on her, though they paid no good for ill. But in the eyes of many the very doubtfulness of her position gave her a certain éclat. Her beauty too—dangerous passport—admitted

her to circles which were exclusive in their way. She was fêted, flattered, and caressed among them; and more pitiable than even "the women who have biographies," was quite the rage. One day a little comfort came to her among all this gilded misery. It was Gracie.

"My father is to be married to that woman at once," said she, "and I have kept my promise, Ella, and come to you."

It seemed to Ella that into the cold gray murk of her wintry sky a little blue had at last shown itself, and that, peradventure, it would abide there. But it was not so to be.

On the third day, when Gracie had gone out—she had not said "whither," though poor Ella's heart, alive to every presentiment of evil, foreboded that she was seeking for some place or employment that should tear from her, once more, this dear companion—a visitor called.

It was Hugh Darall.

Ella had not seen him since the days when she had revisited Woolwich in Cecil's company, and the sight of him tried her sorely. He asked after her husband, but not in his frank old fashion. He knew of course, in common with all the world, that there was some shadow between them, and his manner was tender and, as it seemed to her, commiserating. He did pity her, no doubt, though he meant only to show his sympathy, and she resented his pity.

"My husband was well the last time I heard of him," said she coldly; and then went on at once to congratulate him upon his appointment on the survey.

"Thanks," said he; "it is that piece of good fortune, Mrs. Landon, in connection with something else that can be called by no such term, that brings me up to town—Miss Ray is now living with you, I hear—as your companion."

"Your informant is mistaken, Mr. Darall. Gracie does me the honour, and the great kindness, of staying with me for the present as my guest; that is all."

"You use gracious words where other people are not so delicate, Mrs. Landon," returned he with emotion. "You had always a good heart."

"Had I?" answered Ella, with a bitter smile.

"Yes, and you have it still," continued Darall, earnestly. "It was from Gracie's father that I heard she had come to reside with you in the position of which I spoke."

"He is angry with her for having refused to sanction by her presence his marriage with Miss de Horsingham," explained Ella. "She has done quite right in coming to me."

"Of course," said Darall, quietly; "she is happy in having such a friend—to come to. I am here, however, Mrs. Landon—for why should I conceal it?—to offer her a home—though it will be a very humble one—of her own."

"You are going to take her away from me then?" said Ella, fiercely. "You wish to rob me of my last treasure." Then, reminded by Darall's astonished look that her anger was unintelligible to him, she burst into tears.

"Forgive me, Mr. Darall," sobbed she, "I am not well—not mistress of myself to-day."

"There is nothing to forgive, Mrs. Landon," said he softly; "I ought indeed to feel in some sort complimented upon Gracie's account, since she has become so indispensable to you. But I trust that, in making her my own, I shall not deprive you of her friendship. She will be a soldier's wife, and it is only too likely that I may have to leave her—perhaps for years—when a friend like you will be invaluable to her. Besides, even at present, her home—where you will be always welcome—will be but a few hours' journey: it is near Pullham Junction, and what is to prevent your meeting?"

"What indeed?" sighed Ella. She was thinking of her husband, who, though Wellborough was not much farther off than Pullham, found the distance, or affected to do so, so insuperable.

"My mother is already settled in that neighbourhood, at Grantham," continued Darall, "which is quite convenient so far as my work is concerned, and is by her account a charming spot. I am going down thither, to-day, and if I am able to take with me dear Gracie's promise to be my wife, I shall be a happy man indeed."

"You deserve happiness, Mr. Darall; nay—though that is saying very much indeed—you even deserve Gracie. I have no doubt of what her answer will be to the question you have come to ask. It is said of very old people, that their happiness is derived from the contemplation of it in those they love. I am not old, but I hope—nay, I believe—that that much will be vouchsafed me with respect to Gracie."

The hopelessness, as regarded herself,

that this speech implied was not lost upon her companion; but a sound caught his ear, that at once monopolised his attention, and chased from his face, in spite of himself, its sympathetic sadness. It was Gracie's voice; and presently her step was heard passing by upstairs.

"Come in, my dear," said Ella, opening the door of the back drawing-room, so that Darall in the front one was not immediately visible to her friend.

"I was told you had someone with you," said Gracie, simply.

"You should not believe everything that is told you."

"I should be very willing to disbelieve some things," said Gracie, wearily.

"What, you have been trying to find some excuse to get away from me, have you? A genteel family in want of a governess. I thought as much."

"Well, yes—I was not very particular about the gentility; but I have been told that I am 'a drug in the market,' which is not pleasant."

"I am sure you are a very wholesome drug, and agree with me to perfection," returned Ella, smiling. "Still, if you are really fixed on setting up on your own account, Gracie, I have heard—since I saw you last—of a situation which will just suit you."

"Oh, Ella, are you serious? You don't know how I pine, notwithstanding all your kindness, to begin to do something for myself."

"I am quite serious, but unhappily the situation is in the country."

"I am sorry for that, dear Ella, as respects yourself; still—I never knew till to-day the full meaning of the proverb, 'Beggars must not be choosers!'"

"Just so. The place is in a pretty district. You will meet, I can vouch for it, with every kindness there; and though the house, I hear, is but small, you will find it to be indeed a home. The terms are only moderate, but I think the offer a satisfactory one."

"I shall most gratefully accept it," said Gracie, fervently.

"I thought you would—Mr. Darall, she accepts it."

It was rather wicked of Ella, but she made amends for her delinquency by instantly withdrawing from the apartment, and leaving Gracie in her new employer's arms.